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THAÏS

LYRIC COMEDY

IN THREE ACTS, SEVEN SCENES

TEXT BY

LOUIS GALLET

AFTER THE ROMANCE BY

ANATOLE FRANCE

MUSIC BY

J. MASSENET

PARIS

PRINTED BY HERBERT CLARKE

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*Opera House
Paris. — 5 April 1946*

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THAÏS

LYRIC COMEDY IN THREE ACTS, SEVEN SCENES

Produced for the first time in Paris at the
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC (OPERA HOUSE)

16 MARCH 1894



FOREWORD.

Jules Emile Frédéric Massenet, born at Montaud on the 12th May 1842, was the youngest of twenty-one children. At an early age he evinced a decided musical taste which was fostered by his mother. He entered the Conservatoire and was eventually admitted to the composition class, where he studied under Ambroise Thomas. The composer of "Mignon" was not slow in perceiving the remarkable talents of his new pupil and treated him as a friend, giving him valuable help and advice, of which young Massenet took full advantage. Thenceforward he produced unceasingly songs and symphonies which he timidly submitted to his professor. His precocious fecundity became a source of amusement to his fellow students who did not hesitate to chaff him upon it. "Let him alone," Thomas would say, "he will sow his wild oats. Later on, when he is older and begins to reflect, he will write something worth while. That young man has genius." The repertory of the opera-houses of the world bears witness to the truth of this prophecy.

In 1863 Massenet won the Grand Prix de Rome with a cantata "David Rizzio," and from that date until his death in Paris on the 14th August 1912 operas and orchestral works sprang unceasingly from his fertile brain.

Massenet was Professor of Composition at the Conservatoire from 1878 to 1896, the period of his highest creative power; the years of the production of "Hérodiade," "Manon," "Werther" and "Thaïs". In 1878 he was made a member of the Institut.

In the gorgeous colouring and sumptuous pageantry

of his productions, he appears to follow in the line of Meyerbeer ; and he stands without a rival as the greatest figure amongst the French operatic composers of the latter half of the 19th century.

The best known of Massenet's operas are :—"Le Roi de Lahore," "Hérodiade," "Le Cid," "Manon," "Esclarmonde," "Werther," "Thaïs," "Sapho," "Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame" and "Grisélidis".

"Thaïs," one of the finest and most popular of the works of M. Anatole France, gains nothing by its adaptation to the libretto of an opera. Nothing is left of the elegant scepticism of thought, the mordant style. Nevertheless there still remain some interesting episodes on which foundation the musician has succeeded in building the edifice of a fine lyric drama.

The action of "Thaïs" takes place at the end of the fourth century. The first act discloses a refuge of Cenobites in a corner of the plain of Thebes, on the banks of the Nile. They are just finishing their meal, but at the table one seat remains still vacant. It is that of the brother Athanael (called in the novel by the less musical name of Paphnuce) who has gone to Alexandria. Soon he returns, scandalized by the presence of the beautiful actress and courtesan Thaïs, who has seduced all the men of the town. Athanael himself had known Thaïs before he left Alexandria to devote himself to the Lord's service, and anew haunted by her memory, he decides that it would be a pious act to persuade her to abandon her life of debauchery.

In his dreams he sees her on the stage of the theatre of Alexandria representing the loves of Aphrodite, and on awakening he determines to seek her at once and endeavour to effect her conversion.

Arrived at Alexandria, Athanael meets an old acquaintance, Nicias, who will be for a day longer the lover of Thaïs (having bought her favours for a week which is nearly ended), and to him the monk discloses his scheme. Nicias invites him to a feast he is giving that night in honour of Thaïs, and lends him suitable raiment. Soon Athanael finds himself face to face with

the actress, who laughs at his attempts to convert her and invites him to visit her at her house. He accepts, and once in Thaïs' house he expounds to her the joys of religion. His eloquence impresses her. She is on the point of yielding, when in the distance she hears the sound of her companions' singing. She repels the monk, who, still not discouraged, tells her he will await her at the entrance to her house until daybreak.

At night we see him seated on the steps of Thaïs' house. His words have taken effect : she comes out, her rich garments replaced by a rough woollen dress. She begs the monk to lead her to a convent. He has accomplished her redemption.

Unaware of the fact, however, Athanael has deceived himself. Not love of God but jealousy made him seek to redeem the courtesan. Returning to Thebes after leading Thaïs to a convent, he finds to his horror that he is madly in love with her.

Once more he dreams of her ; but this time he sees her, penitent and full of remorse, at the point of death in the convent. Awaking, he hurries there to find his dream is true : Thaïs is dying. Maddened by his passionate love he cannot bear to lose her ; and while she thinks only of heaven and her salvation, he talks wildly to her of his love ; and at the end of a scene of strange and compelling power Thaïs dies at last and Athanael falls stricken at her side.

On this libretto Massenet has written a score original and colourful, exploiting all the technical powers of a master of orchestration. The music of the first act (showing the retreat of the Cenobites) in its subdued and even severe colouring serves as contrast to the richly sensuous music and movement of the scene in the house of Nicias.

In the second act the austere music given to the monk provides a sombre background for the voluptuous outbursts of the courtesan. The symphonic intermezzo separating this act from the following one is in reality

a violin solo supported by harps, and is well-known and frequently given as a concert item under the title of "Méditation".

The next act opens with the scene in which Thaïs flees with the monk. Athanael wants her to destroy all souvenirs of her past life. She obeys ; but asks to be allowed to keep a little statue of Eros, and sings the beautiful air "L'amour est une vertu rare", a graceful invocation of the purity of Love.

The final scene is that of the death of Thaïs, which has been handled by the composer with great skill ; and once again he is quick to make use of contrast—this time between the piety of Thaïs, who thinks of nothing but her hope of salvation, and the impious love of Athanael who is overcome by a consuming passion for the former courtesan ; which, together with the desolate chant of the nuns, cannot fail to arouse the emotions of the hearer, and gives us Massenet at his finest.

The creators of the principal rôles on the occasion of the first performance of this opera (at the Opéra, Paris, 16 March 1894) were :

Thaïs : Mme Sybil Sanderson.

Athanael : M. Delmas.

Nicias : M. Alvarez.

Gilson MacCormack,
Paris Correspondent "Opera" (London)

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

In offering to lovers of opera this English translation of M. Louis Gallet's operatic version of "Thaïs", it is felt that many will prefer an integral translation of the text, which, better than a mere synopsis of the story, will help them to a clearer understanding and, it is hoped, a keener enjoyment of the work. It has been prepared with this purpose only in view and makes no attempt to conform to the metre of the original.

A. H. Baxter.

DANCE.

FIRST ACT.

Double of Thaïs—Mlle. B. Mante.

SECOND SCENE.

Comédiennes.

Coryphées—Mlles. Tétard, Meunier, Billon, Dockes,
Didier, Sirède, Moormans, Hatrel.

Comedians.

Messrs. Staals, Berger, Lavigne, Leblanc, Baron II,
Cuvelier.

SECOND ACT.

SECOND SCENE.

Divertisement by M. J. Hansen.—Mlle. Zambelli.

Mlles. H. Regnier, Robin, J. Regnier, Viollat, Blanc,
Gallay, Beauvais, Charrier, de Mérode, Morlet, Boos,
Monchanin, Barbier, Esnel.

La Charmeuse de Siloé.—Mlle. B. Mendès.

Mlles. Tétard, Meunier, Dockes, Billon, Hatrel, Moor-
mans, Keller, B. Mante, Didier, Sirède, Klein, Lainé,
Richaume, Couat, Souplet, Couralet, Hugon II,
Bouissavin, Robiette, Dethul, Mendès, Labatoux,
Poncet, Neetens.

CAST.

	1894	1898
	MM.	MM.
ATHANAEL (<i>Baritone</i>).	DELMAS.	DELMAS.
NICIAS (<i>Tenor</i>)	ALVAREZ.	VAGUET.
PALEMON (<i>Basso</i>) . . .	DELPOUGET.	DELPOUGET.
SERVANT	EUZET.	FOURCADE.
	Mmes.	Mmes.
THAIS (<i>Soprano</i>)	S. SANDERSON.	L. BERTHET.
ALBINE (<i>Mezzo-sopr.</i>) .	BEAUBAIS.	PRADIER.
CROBYLE (<i>Soprano</i>) . .	MARCY.	AGUSSOL.
MYRTALE (<i>Soprano</i>) .	HEGLON.	BEAUBAIS.

CENOBITES.

MM. LAURENT, GALLOIS, ROGER, BARRAU, DHORNE,
BOURGEOIS, LACOME, DENOYÉ, PALIANTI, PERRIN,
BOUISSAVIN.

CHORUSES.

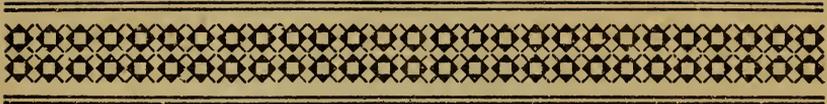
Histrions.—Comédiennes.—Philosophers.—Friends of
Nicias.—The White Sisters.

SCENERY.

by MM. JAMBON, BAILLY and CARPEZAT.

COSTUMES.

designed by M. CHAS. BIANCHINI.



ACT ONE.

SCENE ONE.

The Theban Desert.—The huts of the Cenobites on the banks of the Nile. It is still daylight, twelve Cenobites and the aged Palemon are seated around a long table. In the centre, Palemon presides over the frugal and peaceful meal. One place, Athanael's, is vacant.

A CENOBSITE.

Here is the bread.

ANOTHER.

And the salt.

ANOTHER.

And the hyssop.

ANOTHER.

Here is the honey.

ANOTHER.

And here is the water.—

PALEMON, *rising, fervently.*

Every morning heaven pours its mercies like a dew, on my garden. Let us praise God in those good things which He gives us, and pray that He may keep us in His peace.

THE CENOBITES, *almost whispered.*

May the black demons of the pit withdraw from our path.

The Cenobites peacefully continue their meal.

A CENOBITE, *breaking the silence.*

Over Athanael, our brother, stretch forth, Lord, the strength of Thine arm.

SEVERAL CENOBITES, *regretfully.*

Athanael!...

OTHER CENOBITES, *in the same tone.*

His absence is long!

OTHERS, *enquiringly.*

But when will he return?

PALEMON, *mysteriously.*

The hour of his return is nigh... A dream this night has shown him clearly to me, hastening his steps towards us.

THE CENOBITES, *earnestly.*

Athanael is one of God's elect—(*Piously.*) He reveals himself in visions.

Athanael appears, he advances slowly as though exhausted by fatigue and sorrow.

THE CENOBITES, *respectfully.*

Here he is. Here he is.

ATHANAEL, *in their midst, sorrowfully.*

Peace be with you.

PALEMON and THE CENOBITES.

Greeting, brother. (*All gather around him.*) You are overcome with fatigue—your face is covered with dust—rest yourself—take your place—eat, drink.

ATHANAEL, *sitting dejected and gently pushing away the dishes put before him.*

No, my heart is full of bitterness—I return in sorrow and affliction—The city is given over to sin—a woman, Thaïs, fills it with scandal—and by her, hell there rules over men.

THE CENOBITES, *with a quiet and simple curiosity.*
Who is this Thaïs?

ATHANAEL, *rousing a little from his lethargy and immediately subsiding again.*

An infamous priestess—of the cult of Venus... (*Humbly, sweetly and as though recalling a distant past.*) Alas, when still a child, before grace touched my heart—I knew her... (*More sombre and agitated.*) One day, to my shame I admit it—I stopped before her accursed door—but God preserved me from this courtesan—and I found peace in this desert—reviling the sin I might have committed—Ah, my soul is troubled—the shame of Thaïs and the evil that she does—cause me bitter pain—and I long to win that soul to God.

PALEMON, *gently, sagely.*

My son, let us not mix with the people of this world—beware of the snares of the Spirit—so are we taught by eternal wisdom.—(*Night falls slowly.*) The night comes—let us pray and sleep.

THE CENOBITES, *with a mysterious awe, heads bowed and hands clasped, move off, praying, and separate to enter their huts.*

May the black demons of the pit—withdraw themselves from our path—Lord, bless the bread and water—Bless the fruit of our gardens—Give to us dreamless sleep—and undisturbed repose.

Athanael lies before his hut, his head resting on a little wooden stool, his hands clasped.

ATHANAEL, *alone, in the twilight.*

O Lord, into Thy hands I commit my soul.

He sleeps.

Almost black night. After a moment of calm and peace, in the middle of the darkness a light grows; in a mist there appears the interior of the theatre at Alexandria; there is an immense crowd on the benches. In front is the stage on which Thaïs, half clothed, but with her face veiled, mimics the passions of Aphrodite. In the theatre of Alexandria loud and prolonged acclamations. Very distant effect. Very faintly the name of Thaïs, shouted by the crowd, can be distinguished. The applause increases to the end of the vision, the mimicry becomes more accentuated. The scene suddenly vanishes; the day returns. Sunrise.

ATHANAEL, *who has gradually awakened, rises : in dismay and anger.*

Shame! Horror! Eternal darkness! Lord, help me—*(He throws himself on the ground and remains prostrated.)* Thou who hast put pity in our souls—Gracious God, praise to Thee—I understand the message of the vision—I will arise and depart. *(He rises with enthusiasm.)* For I would fain deliver this woman—from the bonds of the flesh—In the sky, I see bending towards her—sorrowing angels—Is she not, Lord, the breath of Thy mouth—Ah! the deeper her guilt the more should I pity her—But I will save her, Lord, give her to me, and I will give her back to Thee for life eternal.—*(He calls his brethren who reappear and gather round him.)* Brothers, rise, all of you! Come! my mission is revealed—I must return to the accursed city—God forbid that Thaïs should sink deeper—in the gulf of evil—and me He chooses to bring her back to Him.

Athanael bows before Palemon.

PALEMON, *to Athanael, with a sweet tranquil expression, and as a gentle reproach.*

My son, let us not mix with the people of this world—That is eternal wisdom—

The Cenobites, surrounding Athanael accompany him as far as the road, then kneeling in groups, they reply to Athanael whose voice becomes lost in the solitudes of the Theban desert.

VOICE OF ATHANAEL, *already distant.*

Spirit of light and grace—arm my heart for the fight.

THE CENOBITES, *kneeling.*

Arm his heart for the fight.

VOICE OF ATHANAEL, *still further off.*

And make me strong as the archangel—against the wiles of the evil one.

THE CENOBITES, *murmuring.*

And make him strong as the archangel—against the wiles of the evil one.

The Curtain falls slowly and silently.

SCENE TWO.

The terrace of the house of Nicias at Alexandria. This terrace overlooks the city and the sea : it is shaded by big trees ; on the right, large hanging, behind which is situated the hall prepared for the banquet.

Slowly Athanael appears and halts at the back ; on seeing him, a servant rises in the doorway and goes to meet him.

THE SERVANT.

Be off, beggar, seek your needs elsewhere. My master does not receive dogs such as you.

ATHANAEL, *gently.*

My son, do, if you please, as I bid you. I am your master's friend and I wish to speak to him at once.

THE SERVANT.

Away from here, beggar.

He raises his staff at Athanael.

ATHANAEL, *firmly and calmly.*

Strike, if you will, but inform your master. Go!

Before the look and attitude of Athanael, the servant recoils, bows, and disappears into the house.

ATHANAEL, *alone, after a momentary contemplation of the city from the top of the terrace.*

Behold the terrible city.—Alexandria, where I was born in sin; the bright air where I breathed the awful fragrance of lust.—There is the voluptuous sea—where I listened to the singing of the golden eyed siren—Yes, there is my cradle after the flesh.—Alexandria, my cradle, my native place. I have turned my heart from your love—I hate you for your riches—for your learning and your beauty—I hate you, I hate you.—And now I curse you—as a temple haunted by unclean spirits.—Angels of heaven, winds of God, come, perfume by the beating of your wings—the tainted air which will surround me.

Voices and laughter are heard. Almost immediately, Nicias appears and advances, his arms resting on the shoulders of Crobyle and Myrtale, two beautiful laughing slaves. On seeing Athanael, he stops, leaves them, and approaches with open arms.

NICIAS, *with vivacity and animation.*

Athanael, 'tis you, my school-fellow, my friend, my brother. Oh! there! I recognise you, though indeed you resemble more a brute beast than a man. Embrace me then; welcome. Are you leaving the desert? Are you coming back to us?

ATHANAEL.

O Nicias—I return but for a day, but for one hour.

NICIAS.

Tell me your wishes.

ATHANAEL.

Nicias, you know this actress—Thaïs, the courtesan?

NICIAS, *laughing*.

Surely, I know her! furthermore she is mine—for one more day. I have sold my vines for her and my last piece of land and my last mill—and composed three volumes of elegies : and all that goes for nothing. In trying to satisfy her I should be wasting my labours.—her love is light and fleeting as a dream! Athanael what do you want with her?

ATHANAEL.

I wish to lead her to God.

NICIAS, *bursting into laughter*.

My poor friend,—beware lest you offend Venus whose priestess she is.

ATHANAEL, *more energetically*.

I wish to lead her to God! Go, Nicias—I will snatch Thaïs from this impure love—and I will give her as a bride to Jesus—to enter into a convent—Thaïs will follow me to-day.

NICIAS, *quietly, in Athanael's ear, and laughing*.

Beware of offending Venus, the powerful goddess—She will be revenged.

ATHANAEL.

God will protect me—*(After a moment.)* Where can I see this woman?

NICIAS.

Why here! For the last time—she is to sup with me—in very gay company—she is playing to-day—she will come on leaving the theatre.

ATHANAEL.

Then lend me an Asian robe, friend, so that I may appear worthily at this feast you are offering her.

NICIAS.

Crobyle and Myrtale, my dears,—hasten to array my good Athanael.

Whilst Nicias and Athanael are seated in a friendly conversation, Myrtale claps her hands; the servant appears and she gives him an order. He goes away and returns immediately with slaves carrying a box from which Crobyle and Myrtale take the articles which are to make up Athanael's toilet, also a metal mirror in which, laughing, they show him his face. Then, whilst seated, he continues to talk to Nicias—they begin to pour perfumes on his head, and to dress his hair and beard. Nicias, smiling, watches them.

NICIAS.

Now I shall see you once more elegant as of old.

ATHANAEL.

Yes, I borrow from hell weapons against itself.

NICIAS.

Proud philosopher, the human soul is weak.

ATHANAEL.

I do not fear pride when Heaven guides me.

CROBYLE, *to Myrtale, aside.*

He is young!

MYRTALE, *to Crobyle, similarly.*

He is handsome.

CROBYLE.

His beard is rather ragged.

MYRTALE.

His eyes are full of fire.

CROBYLE.

This head-band suits him well.

MYRTALE and CROBYLE.

Dear Satrap, here are your bracelets.

MYRTALE.

Your rings!

CROBYLE.

Hold out your arms.

MYRTALE.

Your fingers.

MYRTALE and CROBYLE, *aside*.

He is young, he is handsome, his eyes are full of fire.

MYRTALE, *continuing the dressing*.

Now, the robe.

CROBYLE, *coaxingly*.

Take off that black hair-cloth.

ATHANAEL, *rising as though to escape them*.

Ah, women, that would I never do!

CROBYLE and MYRTALE, *at first frightened by Athanael's brusque refusal, quietly approach him again*.

Very well! (*Putting an embroidered robe over his tunic*).
Hide your austerity under this soft robe.

NICIAS, *to Athanael*.

Take no offence at their banter, lower not your eyes before them!—rather admire them.

ATHANAEL, *to himself.*

Come, Spirit of Light—arm my heart for the conflict
—against the wiles of the evil one.

CROBYLE and MYRTALE, *aside.*

He is as handsome as a young god—if Phœbe should
encounter him,—his austere divinity—would become
humanized.

(They continue his toilet.)

MYRTALE, *to Athanael.*

Let us put on you these sandals of gold.

CROBYLE, *to Athanael also.*

Let us pour this perfume on your cheeks.

CROBYLE and MYRTALE, *aside.*

He is as handsome as a young god.

*Loud and prolonged acclamations in the distance. At
the sound, Nicias goes up the terrace and looks towards
the city.*

NICIAS, *coming back towards Athanael, smiling.*

Have a care for yourself. Here comes your terrible
enemy.

*Groups of players and comediennes mingled with philo-
sophers, friends of Nicias, appear on the terrace, slightly
preceding the arrival of Thaïs.*

PLAYERS, COMEDIENNES and PHILOSOPHERS, *surrounding
Thaïs, and bowing before her.*

Thaïs! sister of Karites!—Rose of Alexandria! Thaïs!
greatly desired! Thaïs! Thaïs! Thaïs!

NICIAS, *greeting his guests and indicating to them the ban-
queting hall of which the slaves lift the hangings.*

Thaïs! dear Thaïs! Hermadore—Aristobule—Calli-
crate—Dorion—my guests,—my friends, the gods be
with you.

All enter the hall and the curtains are closed. Thaïs has been gently detained by Nicias at the moment she was about to follow his friends into the banqueting hall. Nicias seats himself; Thaïs is near him : she remains standing and replies with a bitter ironical smile to Nicias who looks at her lovingly but sadly.

THAIS.

It is Thaïs, the fragile idol, who comes for the last time to seat herself at your flower-decked table—To-morrow I shall be to you nothing more than a name.

NICIAS.

We have loved a long week.—'Tis great constancy and I do not complain,—and you are going hence, free, far from my arms.—

THAIS.

For to-night, rejoice—Let the happy hours unfold themselves—and let us ask no more of this night—than a little wild rapture and divine forgetfulness.—To-morrow... I shall be to you nothing more than a name.

Several philosophers, among whom is Athanael, in grave discussion, appear from the hall, and proceed slowly towards the terrace where they stop. Athanael detaches himself from the group : he stands motionless, sternly regarding Thaïs.

THAIS, to Nicias.

Who is this stranger who so sternly turns his gaze on me? I have never seen him appear at our feasts. Whence comes he? Who is he?

NICIAS, rather quietly and casually.

A simple-souled philosopher—a hermit from the desert—(Ironically.) He has come to see you ; take care!

THAIS.

What does he bring? Love?

NICIAS.

No human weakness could enervate his heart. He wishes to convert you to his holy doctrine.

THAIS.

What is his teaching?

ATHANAEL, *advancing.*

The despising of the flesh,—the love of sorrow—stern penitence.

THAIS, *after looking at him for some moments.*

Away; off with you! I believe only in love—and no other power could have any hold on me.

ATHANAEL, *who has listened to her with sombre anger, advances towards her and says, sharply.*

Ah! do not blaspheme.

At these words, the philosophers end their discussion and descend towards Thais. All the guests, warned by the slaves, leave the banqueting hall and gradually, with feelings of astonishment and curiosity, gather round Thais and Nicias.

THAIS, *to Athanael, with a kind of ironical coaxing.*

What makes you so stern—and why do you contradict the light in your eyes.—What unhappy folly makes you miss your destiny? Man made for love, what an error is yours.—Man made for knowledge, what blinds you thus?—You have not touched the cup of life.—You are ignorant of the wisdom of love.—Be seated near us, crown yourself with roses,—nothing is true but love, stretch forth your arms to love.

NICIAS and THE CROWD.

Be seated near us, crown yourself with roses,—nothing is true but love, stretch forth your arms to love.

ATHANAEL, *very earnestly.*

No! I hate your empty revelries—No! here I will be silent, but sinful woman, I will enter your palace to bring you salvation,—and I shall conquer Hell by triumphing over you.

THAIS, NICIAS, THE CROWD.

Crown yourself with roses—nothing is true but love—stretch forth your arms to love.

ATHANAEL, *going to the back and preparing to depart : speaking as with authority.*

I will enter your palace to bring you salvation.

NICIAS, THE CROWD, *provokingly.*

Dare to come, you who defy Venus!

THAIS, *preparing to repeat the scene of the passions of Aphrodite (the dream of the first scene) to Athanael, provokingly.*

Dare to come, you who defy Venus!

Slaves prepare to remove the clothing of Thais.—Athanael with a gesture of horror, flees.





ACT TWO.

SCENE ONE.

The house of Thaïs. The light penetrates this retreat across shallow pools of water, which soften it and lend it rainbow hues. A statue of Venus in the front on a pedestal. Before the pedestal an incense-burner. The floor is covered with Byzantine carpets, embroidered cushions and skins of Lybian lions. Large onyx vases from which spring perseas in bloom. Thaïs appears accompanied by some players and a small group of comédiennes. Presently, she dismisses them all with a gesture.

THAIS, *alone, wearily and bitterly.*

Ah! I am weary unto death!—All these men—are merely indifferent and brutish. The women are spiteful—and the hours burdensome—My soul yearns—Where shall I find repose, and how can I achieve happiness?—*(Musing, she takes up a mirror.)* Oh! my faithful mirror—reassure me; tell me that I am still beautiful—that I shall be so for ever—that nothing will wither the roses of my lips—that nothing will tarnish the pure gold of my hair;—tell me that I am beautiful and that I shall be beautiful for ever! for ever! *(Drawing herself up, she listens, as though a voice were speaking to her from the obscurity.)* Ah! be silent, pitiless voice—voice which tells me: Thaïs, you will grow old! So, one day, Thaïs will no longer be Thaïs—No! No! I cannot believe it—and if there are not to preserve beauty—sovereign secrets, magic arts—thou, Venus, assure me of its eternity.—*(Addressing the statue of Venus, murmuring and prayer-*

fully.) Venus, unseen and present—Venus, rapture of the shades—answer me! Tell me that I am beautiful and that I shall be beautiful—for ever! That nothing will wither the roses of my lips—that nothing will tarnish the pure gold of my hair;—tell me that I am beautiful and that I shall be beautiful —for ever!—for ever!—for ever!—

She sees Athanael who has entered silently and halted on the threshold.

THAIS, *graciously.*

You have come, stranger, as you said.

ATHANAEL, *murmuring a prayer earnestly.*

Lord, let her radiant face—be as though veiled from my sight—let not the power of her charms—triumph over my will.

THAIS, *with a smile.*

Well, speak now.

ATHANAEL.

It is said that you have no equal—therefore, I wished to know you—and so having seen you, I realize—what glory for me it will be to overcome you.

THAIS, *smiling.*

Your homage is exalted; your pride surpasses it—Presumptuous one, have a care lest you love me.

ATHANAEL, *warmly.*

Ah! I love you, Thaïs, and I love to tell you so—but I love you, not as you understand it!—I, I love you in spirit, I love you in truth.—I promise you better than flower-decked revellings,—and dreams of one brief night;—this blessedness which to-day I bring you—shall never end!

THAIS, *ironically.*

Show me then this wonderful love!—Real love has only one language : kisses.—

ATHANAEL.

Thais, do not scoff! The love that I preach to you—
is the unknown love!

THAIS, *lightly*.

Friend, you come very late ;—I know every extasy.

ATHANAEL.

The love that you know conceives nothing but shame
—That which I bring you is alone glorious.

THAIS.

I think you are rash to insult your hostess.

ATHANAEL.

Insult you!... I only think of winning you to the
truth! (*With rising enthusiasm*). Ah! who will inspire
me with burning words—so that at my breath, O courtesan,
your heart will melt as wax. Who may deliver you to
me—and who will change my speech—into a Jordan
whose spreading waves—shall prepare your soul for life
eternal.

THAIS, *uneasy, looking at him covertly with a vague feeling
of fear*.

For life eternal!

ATHANAEL.

For life eternal!

THAIS, *making a decision, but at first trembling*.

Well, explain to me then—all this mysterious love—
I obey you—I am listening—

*Thais, with a golden spatula, takes a few grains of incense
from a bowl and throws them into the censer.*

ATHANAEL, *aside, feverishly*.

Tumultuous fears disturb my thoughts!—Lord, let
her radiant face be as though veiled from my sight.

A light cloud of smoke envelopes Thais and also the goddess, and whilst Athanael looks at her perplexed, smilingly and as by instinct, she murmurs a kind of mysterious incantation.

THAIS.

Venus, invisible and present—Venus, enchantment of the shades.

ATHANAEL, *aside, praying earnestly.*

Let not the power of her charms—triumph over my will.

THAIS.

Venus, descend and reign—Venus, brightness of the sky and whiteness of the snow—Splendour, Rapture, Sweetness!

ATHANAEL, *violently recovering himself, rends and tears off his borrowed robe, under which he has kept on his hair-cloth.*

I am Athanael, a monk of Antinoé! I come from the holy desert, and I curse the flesh—and I curse the death which possesses you!—and here am I before you, woman,—as before a tomb—and I say to you : Thais, arise, arise.

THAIS, *pale with fear, her hands clasped, crying and sobbing, throws herself at Athanael's feet.*

Do me no hurt. Speak ; what do you require of me? I know that the holy men of the desert detest those who are the creatures of men!—nevertheless, do not despise me—I have no more chosen my fate than my nature—and at least it is not my fault if I am beautiful.—Do not kill me! Ah! I am so fearful of death!—

ATHANAEL, *with enthusiasm.*

No, you will live the life eternal ;—be for ever the well-beloved and the spouse of the Christ whose enemy you were.

THAIS, *with ardour and joy.*

I feel a freshness in my enraptured soul!—I quake, yet remain under a spell!—What is this power he wields?

THE VOICE OF NICIAS, *is heard in the distance and gradually approaches.*

O Thaïs, dainty idol—I desire for the last time—the love of your blooming lips.

THAIS, *listening with a feeling of repulsion.*

Ah! Nicias!—again!—(*Agitatedly, as though to herself*)—My soul is so longer mine.—Love me!—(*Disdainfully and abruptly.*) He has never loved anyone—he loves only love!—

ATHANAEL.

You hear him?

THAIS, *to Athanael, with vigour.*

Well, go!—Tell him I detest all the rich, all the happy ones! let him forget me, do you understand! Tell him I hate him!—

ATHANAEL, *authoritatively.*

At your threshold, until daybreak, I shall await your coming.—

THAIS, *reconsidering, with a last effort at revolt.*

No! I remain Thaïs, Thaïs the courtesan.—I no longer believe in anything and I desire nothing further.—Neither him, nor you, nor your God!

She breaks into a nervous laugh, which finishes in sobs, and buries her face in her cushions, whilst he departs, having given her a last look of holy confidence. The curtains close slowly. The music continues until the following scene.

RELIGIOUS MEDITATION, SYMPHONY.

SCENE TWO.

Before dawn.—On a square, before the house of Thais.— Under the portico, in the foreground, a little statue of Eros; before the image, a lighted lamp. The moon still lights the scene.—At the foot of the steps of the portico Athanael is sleeping, lying on the stones.—In the right background, a house in which Nicias and his boon companions are gathered; the windows are illuminated. A faint sound of festive music is heard. After a time, the door of Thais' house opens. Thais appears; she takes the lamp, which she raises above her head in order to see into the square. Thus she descends the steps; she perceives Athanael, replaces the lamp whence she took it and returns towards him.

THAIS, *leaning towards Athanael, softly, with awe.*

Father, God has spoken to me by your voice! I am here!

ATHANAEL, *rising, to Thais, with awe, softly.*

Thais, God awaited you!

THAIS, *still softly, with humility.*

Your words remain in my heart like a divine balm—I have prayed, I have wept—a great light has sprung up in my soul—Having seen the vanity of all carnal pleasure—I come to you, even as you commanded.

ATHANAEL.

Well, courage, O my sister!—the dawn of rest appears!

THAIS, *humbly.*

What must I do?

ATHANAEL.

Not far from here, towards the west—there is a convent where chosen women live as do angels, in perfect com-

munion : poor, that Jesus may love them ; modest, that he may look upon them,—and chaste, that he may espouse them.—'Tis there that I will lead you.—To their pious mother, Albine, I will confide you!

THAIS.

Albine, daughter of the Caesars!

ATHANAEL, *simply*.

And the purest servant of Christ! (*Mysteriously*.) There I shall enclose you in a narrow cell—until the day when Jesus will come to deliver you! (*With increasing enthusiasm*.) Believe me, have no fear! He Himself will come—and how the depth of your soul will thrill—when you feel on your eyes—the touch of His fingers of Light—to wipe away your tears!—

THAIS, *joyfully*.

Ah! lead me, my father, to the house of Albine.

ATHANAEL.

Yes. But, first destroy that which was of the impure Thais :—your palace, your wealth—all that proclaims your shame!—Burn all! destroy all!—

THAIS, *resigned*.

Father, let it be so.—(*She goes towards the house, then stops with a smile before the little image of Eros*.) I wish to keep nothing of my past but this... (*Taking up and carrying in her arms the image which she shows to Athanael*.) This ivory image,—this child, of an old and marvellous craftsmanship. It is Eros! It is love! (*Gently and chastely*.) Consider, O my father, that we cannot treat him cruelly.—Love is a rare virtue—I have sinned, not through him, but rather against him.—Ah! I do not regret having had him as master—but that I misunderstood his will! He forbids a woman to give herself to one who comes not in his name ;—and it is for this law that he should rightly be honoured.—Take

him, to place him in some monastery—and those who see him will turn to God—for love raises us to heavenly thoughts.—(After a pause.) When Nicias loved me, he gave me this statue.

ATHANAEL, *with an outburst of anger.*

Nicias! ah! cursed be the poisoned source—whence you received this gift! Let it be destroyed. (*He seizes the statuette which he flings violently on the pavement where it breaks : he kicks away the pieces.*) And all else to the flames, to the pit! Come, Thaïs—let all that you were return to dust—to eternal oblivion!

THAIS, *with bowed head, trembling.*

Let all return to the dust—to eternal oblivion—Come!

ATHANAEL.

Come!

When Thaïs and Athanael have gone, Nicias and all the characters of the second scene appear.—They advance gaily, noisily, from the house in the background. Nicias is leading them, very animated, as though a little giddy from intoxication.

NICIAS and THE CHORUS.

Follow me, friends all! The night is not ended!—Chance has repaid me thirty times the price I paid for the beauty of Thaïs.—Therefore, let us rejoice, again, again, again!

—Evohe!

Call the Eastern dancers—the snake charmers and the jesters!—Let us continue until dawn—dances, games and merry cries.

—Evohe!

Knock on the tavern doors—Light up the torches—Let us shame the sun!—Serve up iced wines!—Spread thick carpets here!—To my side, Crobyle, and you Myrtale.

—Evohe!

—There is no truth but life!
—There is no wisdom but folly!
—Evohe!

With much bustle, Nicias' orders are carried out.—He falls languidly among the cushions brought by his retainers.—Around him gather Crobyle, Myrtale, women and players.

BALLET.

After several dances "La Charmeuse" appears.

NICIAS, *on the appearance of "La Charmeuse".*

Here is the incomparable!
Take your lyre, Crobyle, and you, take the zither—
Myrtale! And sing both—the Hymn of Beauty.

Then Crobyle and Myrtale sing, accompanying themselves on their instruments : whilst "La Charmeuse" performs with slow poses and light step, mingling her voice with the song of the two slaves.

CROBYLE and MYRTALE.

I.

Fairer is she who comes,
Than Sheba's queen,
Who danced upon mirrors.

II.

And from 'neath her veils
Flash the notes of her song
Like arrows of fire.

III.

Her skin is pale amber
Like blood are her lips,
And her eyes as the night.

IV.

So airy her gesture
As lithesome as reed,
And light as a bird.

V.

Her glances are chains,
Which make of men captives,
Her looks are resistless.

VI.

She allures, she caresses,
So mortal her charm is
None ever withstood it.

VII.

Like an idol impassive
She goes on without knowing
The dread power she possesses.

Continuation and end of ballet.

At this moment, Athanael comes quickly out of the house carrying a lighted torch.

NICIAS, *ironically.*

Ah! 'tis he!—it is Athanael!—

FRIENDS.

Athanael!—Greeting, wisest of the wise!—Thais has then disarmed your reason?—*(Laughingly.)* Ah! Ah! See his glorious face.

ATHANAEL, *throwing down his torch which goes out.*

Ah! hold your peace! Thais is the bride of God—she belongs no more to you! The vile Thais is dead for ever... and the new Thais—behold her!

Thaïs appears, her hair hanging loose, dressed in a woollen robe. Her slaves follow her sadly, looking towards the house, from which rise at this moment light wisps of smoke, shortly to be succeeded by the gleam of fire and flames as the scene progresses.—A crowd attracted by the cries and laughter continues to gather in the square.

ATHANAEL, *to Thaïs.*

Come, my sister, and let us flee this city for ever.

THE CROWD, *first group, interposing.*

Ah! never, no, never.

THE CROWD and FRIENDS OF NICIAS, *second group, likewise.*

Take her away? What does he say?

THAIS.

He speaks truly.

NICIAS.

Thaïs, you would leave us! Is it possible?

Nicias takes Thaïs by the arm.

ATHANAEL, *snatching her away.*

Impious man!—beware of death if you touch her.—She is sacred! she belongs to God! (*Taking Thaïs close to him and attempting to depart.*) Make way!

THE CROWD, *excited.*

No! What does he want then, this man!—Let him go back to the desert.

A LITTLE GROUP OF THE POPULACE, *threatening Athanael.*

Go away! Baboon!

THE CROWD, *in groups.*

Take Thaïs away from us!—Eh! who will make us our living! My robes! my necklaces! my horses! my

jewels!—who will pay us? Cannot the law aid us? He is stealing Thaïs from us!

FRIGHTENED WOMEN, *pointing out the burning house.*
Flames! Fire! the palace is burning.

THE CROWD, *shouting.*

She must stay!—and as for him, down with him! to the ravens! to the gibbet, into the ditch!—

A MAN OF THE POPULACE, *throwing at Athanael a stone which wounds him on the face.*

There, satyr, for you!—

ATHANAEL, THAIS, *close together, standing calmly, watching the threatening crowd. The fire increases.*

Ah! let us die, if our hour is come!—Let us purchase in a moment—eternal joy—at the cost of our blood!

THE CROWD, *furiously.*

Kill him!

NICIAS, *succeeding in interposing.*

Stop! by all the gods! there is wherewith to appease you.

He dips into his wallet and scatters handfuls of gold.

THE CROWD, *all flinging themselves on the gold over which they quarrel noisily.*

Gold!

NICIAS, *to Athanael and Thaïs.*

Go!—Farewell, Thaïs, in vain will you forget me;—the memory of you will be the perfume of my soul!
Nicias scatters more gold. Renewed shouts from the crowd.
—*Athanael and Thaïs flee. The palace burns.*

ACT THREE.

SCENE ONE.

The Oasis.—A well under the palms. Further off, a shelter for travellers, amidst the foliage. Still further, on the fringe of the sands, gleaming in the sun, the white cells of the retreat of Albine.

The sun is very high; under the palms come one by one in silence several women, go down to the well, come up again and depart. After a short while, Thais and Athanael appear. Thais, overcome with fatigue, can scarcely stand.

THAIS.

The burning sun overpowers me—like a too heavy burden! Ah! I sink beneath the hardships of the day! Let us stay!

ATHANAEL.

No. Forward still!—Crush your body, abase your flesh!

THAIS, *humbly*.

Father, you are right. My suffering—I offer it to the Divine Redeemer.

ATHANAEL.

Repentance alone purifies us.—Forward! This perfect body which you gave—to pagans, to infidels—(*With sudden passion*) to Nicias! Ah! God had nevertheless formed it—that it might become his tabernacle! And

now that you know the truth—You can no longer close your lips—you can no longer clasp your hands—without feeling a loathing of your self.

THAIS, *humbly.*

Father, you are right.

ATHANAEL.

Forward! Atone!

THAIS, *fearfully.*

Are we still far from the house of God?

ATHANAEL, *roughly.*

What matter? Forward!

THAIS, *tottering.*

I cannot!—Pardon, venerable father!

As she is about to swoon, he supports her in his arms, then seats her in the shade. He looks at her for a moment in silence. Then suddenly the expression on his face softens.

ATHANAEL.

Ah! drops of blood flow from your white feet.—Pity stirs in my soul!—Poor child, poor woman.—Oh holy Thais! O my sister!... I have prolonged this stern trial too far.—Forgive me! (*He prostrates himself. He weeps. He kisses Thais' bleeding feet.—With adoration.*) O holy, most holy Thais.

THAIS, *looking long at him.*

Your words have the sweetness of a dawn! Let us go on now!

ATHANAEL, *gently restraining her.*

Not yet.—Fresh water and fruit will give you some strength. Wait whilst I go down to the well—to the

hospitable house of rest.—See, yonder, those white huts :—there is the convent of Albine, whither we go. The goal is near. Hope, pray.

He moves away slowly : goes towards the shelter under the foliage, brings back fruit in a basket, then goes down to the well with a wooden cup.

THAIS, *alone for a moment.*

O messenger of God, so good in your severity—be blessed, you who have opened heaven to me.—My flesh bleeds and my soul is full of joy—A gentle breeze bathes my burning forehead.—Fresher than the spring water—sweeter than the honeycomb—is your thought within me, sweet and wholesome—and my spirit, freed from the earth—floats already in that immensity.—Be blessed, most venerable father.

Athanael returns, with the water and fruit.

ATHANAEL.

Bathe your hands and lips in water.—Taste this fruit, appease that fever—which makes your eyes sparkle! Your life is now my precious treasure—it belongs to me ; God has entrusted it to me.

He pours water on Thais' hands, holds the cup to her lips. She drinks, then with a smile raises the cup towards him.

THAIS.

Drink you now!

ATHANAEL.

—No! seeing you revive—I taste a better sweetness—and only to see your ills appeased enraptures me. O ineffable sweetness!

THAIS.

O divine goodness!

He hands her fruit. Whilst she eats he goes again to fill the cup with water and brings it to her. Silent scene, during which rises in the distance a slow psalmody, which gradually approaches, until Albine and the White Sisters enter the scene.

VOICES, *in the distance.*

Pater noster, qui es in cœlis... Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis.

THAIS.

Who comes?

ATHANAEL.

Ah! Divine providence! Here is the venerable Albine—and her sisters bringing the convent's black bread.—They come towards us and pray as they walk.

THE VOICES, *very near.*

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem—sed libera nos a malo.

Albine and her companions appear.

ATHANAEL.

Amen!

On seeing Athanael, Albine, who walks leaning on her pastoral staff, stops, as do the White Sisters, with great signs of respect. Thais, who has risen, stands beside Athanael.

ATHANAEL, *to Albine.*

The peace of the Lord be with you, venerable Albine.—I bring to your heavenly hive—a bee, which by grace from on high—I found one day lost on a flowerless road.—In the hollow of my hand I took it, very feeble.—With

my breath have I revived it and here, in order to consecrate it to God, I give it to you.

Thais kneels before Albine.

ALBINE.

So let it be! Come, my daughter.

She takes Thais in her arms and holds her a moment in a motherly embrace.

ATHANAEL.

I will go no further. My work is accomplished.— Goodbye, dear Thais—remain alone in the narrow cell.—Repent, and pray, at all times, for me.

THAIS, *taking his hands.*

I kiss your helpful hands.—I grieve to part from you—O you who have brought me to God!

ATHANAEL.

O touching words! O adorable tears! Happy is the sinner won to Eternal Love. (*With enthusiasm.*) How beautiful is her face! What light of joy shines from her eyes!

THAIS.

Farewell, my father, farewell!... For ever!

ATHANAEL, *as though struck.*

For ever?

THAIS.

In the heavenly city,—we shall meet again.

ALBINE and THE WHITE SISTERS.

Amen!

They depart. Athanael looks after them for a moment, as in a dream.

ATHANAEL, *alone.*

She walks slowly amongst the White Sisters. The palms bow their branches—as if to cool her brow—And the days, the years will pass—without my beholding her again. (*At first slowly, then in a cry of anguish.*) I shall see her no more!... I shall see her no more!

Leaning on his staff, he still looks ardently in the direction Thäis has taken. The curtain falls.

SCENE TWO.

At Thebaid.—The huts of the Cenobites on the banks of the Nile.—The western sky is red and there is a threat of storm in the air.—The Cenobites have just terminated their evening meal and view the sky with a vague feeling of fear.—Blasts of the simoon in the distance.—Cries of the jackal and growlings of lions in the depths of the desert.

THE CENOBITES.

How heavy is the sky! what torpor bears upon beings and all things.—The cry of the jackal is heard afar off—The wind will release its roaring legions—with thunder and lightning.

PALÉMON, *to the Cenobites who hurry to their work at his order.*

Let us return to our huts,—and our corn and fruit!—We may fear a stormy night which will scatter them.

A CENOBSITE, *whilst walking.*

Athanael!... who has seen him?

PALEMON.

For the twenty days since he returned to us—my brothers, I truly believe he has neither eaten nor drunk!—The victory which he has gained over hell—seems to have shattered him body and soul!

Athanael emerges from his hut, his eyes fixed, looking grim, his body bent.

THE CENOBITES, *respectfully.*

There he comes.

Athanael passes through them as though not seeing them.

A GROUP.

His thoughts are elsewhere—

ANOTHER GROUP.

They are with God!

THE CENOBITES, *moving off.*

Let us respect his silence—and leave him alone.

ATHANAEL, *to Palémon, humbly.*

Stay with me—I must confess my soul's trouble to your serene soul.—You know, O Palémon, that I have regained the soul of her who was the sinful Thaïs.—A proud joy succeeded this triumph,—and I have come back to the peaceful desert!—Now, peace is no more with me.—In vain have I chastened the flesh,—in vain have I bruised it! a demon possesses me!—The beauty of the woman haunts my dreams! I see nothing but Thaïs, or rather, it is not she, it is Helen and Phryne, it is Venus Astarte—every splendour and every voluptuousness,—in a single creature!

He falls as if crushed with shame at the feet of Palémon.

PALEMON

Did I not say to you :—“My son, let us not mingle with the people of this world—beware of the snares of the Spirit!” Ah! why did you leave us?—May God help you!—Farewell!—

Athanael rises—Palémon embraces him and moves away. —Athanael, alone, kneels upon his mat, stretching out his arms in silent and fervent prayer.—After which, he lies down with clasped hands and sleeps.

After a time, the form of Thaïs appears, luminous in the dusk.

THAIS, *to Athanael with great charm and seductive provocation.*

What makes you so stern, and why do you contradict the light in your eyes?—

ATHANAEL, *in a smothered voice, as in a dream.*
Thaïs!...

THAIS.

What unhappy folly causes you to miss your destiny? —Man made for love, what an error is yours!

ATHANAEL, *breathless, rising.*

Ah! Satan! behind me!... my flesh burns!

THAIS, *provokingly.*

Dare to come, you who defy Venus!

ATHANAEL, *bewildered.*

I am dying! Thaïs! Come!—

Shrill laughter from Thaïs whose image suddenly disappears.

Vision : The sky clears.—A new vision shows Athanael the garden of the convent of Albine.—In the shade of a large fig tree, Thaïs lies motionless.—Around her kneel the White Sisters of the convent.

ATHANAEL, *seeing the vision, recoiling with a cry of dread.*
Ah!

VOICES.

A saint is about to leave the earth.—Thaïs of Alexandria is dying!—Thaïs is dying!

ATHANAEL, *wildly, repeating the words heard in the vision.*

Thaïs is dying! Thaïs is dying! (*In an angry passion.*) Then why the sky, beings, light!—To what purpose the universe! Thaïs is dying! Ah! To see her again! See her! To hold her! Keep her!... I want her! Yes, mad, mad that I am not to have understood—that she alone was everything!... that one of her caresses was worth more than heaven! Oh! I would kill all who have loved her! No, Thaïs, do not die! No! I will take you back!—Be mine! be mine!

He rushes away and disappears in the night. Complete darkness—overspreading clouds, sinister lightnings, thunder. Music continues during the change.

SCENE THREE.

The garden of the convent of Albine.—In the shade of a large fig tree, Thaïs lies, motionless, as though dead.—Her companions and Albine are around her.

THE WHITE SISTERS, *kneeling with clasped hands, around Thaïs,—(Almost murmured).*

Have mercy upon me, O God—according to thy loving-kindness—according to the multitude of thy tender mercies—blot out my transgressions.—

ALBINE, *aside, looking at Thaïs.*

God calls her, and, to-night, the whiteness of the shroud will have veiled that pure face! For three months she has watched, prayed, wept;—her body is worn by penitence—but her sins are blotted out!—

THE WHITE SISTERS.

Have mercy upon me, O God—according to thy loving kindness!—

Athanael, very pale, very distracted, appears at the entrance to the garden. Being seen by Albine, he restrains his emotion and halts humbly. Albine goes respectfully to meet him.—The White Sisters gather into a group which at first hides Thaïs from Athanael's view.

ALBINE, *to Athanael, simply.*

Welcome to our retreat—O, venerable father!—for doubtless you come to bless this saint—whom you gave to us—

ATHANAEL, *with a distraction, a bewilderment, which he tries to master.*

Yes... Thaïs!

ALBINE.

Having performed that which your spirit bade her, she is now about to behold the Eternal Light.

Thaïs' companions having separated; Athanael sees her.

ATHANAEL, *in anguish.*

Thaïs!... Thaïs!...

Stricken with grief, he falls prostrate, Albine and the White Sisters retire a few paces and form a group apart. Whilst they murmur their lamentations, Athanael drags himself on his knees near to Thaïs to whom he holds out his arms.

ATHANAEL, *in a low voice, sorrowfully.*

Thais!—

THAIS, *opening her eyes and looking sadly at Athanael.*

It is you, my father!—(*Continuing in a trance, not hearing what Athanael replies to her.*) Do you remember the glorious journey—when you brought me here?—

ATHANAEL, *tenderly.*

I remember only your womanly beauty.

THAIS.

Do you recall those peaceful hours—in the cool of the oasis?—

ATHANAEL, *ardently.*

Ah! I recall but that unsatisfied thirst—which you alone can quench—

THAIS.

Above all, do you remember your holy words—on that day when through you I came to know the only Love!—

ATHANAEL, *anxiously.*

When I spoke, I deceived you—

THAIS.

And behold, the dawn! and behold the roseate hues of the Eternal Morn.—

ATHANAEL.

No! heaven... nothing exists... nothing is real but the life and the love of human creatures.—I love you!

THAIS.

Heaven opens!—Here are the angels, the prophets...

and the saints!—they come with smiles—with flowers
in their hands.

ATHANAEL.

Listen then to me, my well-beloved!

THAIS, *standing, trembling.*

Two white winged seraphim—float through the sky!
—and as you told me, the sweet Consoler—laying on
my eyes His fingers of Light—wipes away for ever the
tears!

ATHANAEL, *more and more excitedly.*

Come : tell me : I shall live! I shall live!

THAIS.

The sound of the golden harps enchants me!—fragrant
odours reach me!... I feel an exquisite blessedness
soothe all my ills!—Ah! Heaven!... I see God!...

She dies.

*Athanael with a terrible cry throws himself on his knees
before her.*

FINIS.

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